



# **Strengthening the Workforce Pipeline:**

## **Recommendations for Public Health and Healthcare in Missouri**

**State of Missouri  
Public Health and Healthcare Workforce Development  
Workgroups and Taskforce**



## A Message from DHSS Acting Director Paula F. Nickelson

Dear Colleagues:

Missouri's public health and healthcare workforce has been significantly impacted by a variety of factors, including the COVID-19 response, resulting in a compromised outlook for these workforces if positive, proactive action is not undertaken.

Dedicated and involved stakeholders representing a diverse group of employing organizations, agencies and associations of public health and healthcare professionals gathered from November 2021 to June 2022 to develop recommendations to address the outlook of these workforces. The full list of involved organizations, agencies and associations we'd like to thank is included in this report.

As a result, the *Strengthening the Workforce Pipeline: Recommendations for Public Health & Healthcare in Missouri* report presents recommendations to address the future of the public health and healthcare workforce in Missouri. The stakeholder taskforce recognizes there is no short-term fix to this workforce issue. Thus, it is important to note that a key recommendation is the formation of a Public Health & Healthcare Workforce Commission under the authority and oversight of the Office of Workforce Development within the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development. As this recommendation is implemented, the commission will continue developing and implementing solutions to address this workforce situation.

As convener, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services thanks all those who contributed and those who will continue to carry this work forward. The safety, protection and healthcare of our Missouri citizens is dependent upon an educated, effective and adequate workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula F. Nickelson".

Paula F. Nickelson  
Acting Director  
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

## TASKFORCE AND WORKGROUP AGENCIES

The Public Health and Healthcare Workforce Development taskforce and workgroups brought together experts from the healthcare and public health fields to brainstorm innovative ideas to address workforce concerns affecting the State of Missouri.

This collaborative approach involved diverse voices from private industry, academic partners and state agencies, ensuring strategic recommendations that will benefit the State of Missouri and its citizens.

### Missouri State Agencies

Department of Commerce  
and Insurance

Department of  
Elementary and  
Secondary Education

Department of Health and  
Senior Services

Department of Higher  
Education and Workforce  
Development

Department of  
Mental Health

Department of  
Public Safety

Department of  
Social Services

Governor's Office

### Association & Academic Partners

- A.T. Still University / Missouri Area Health Education Centers
- Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services
- Missouri Association of Local Public Health Agencies
- Missouri Association for Rehabilitation Facilities
- Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence
- Missouri Council of Behavioral Health
- Missouri Foundation for Health
- Missouri Health Care Association
- Missouri Hospital Association
- Missouri Primary Care Association
- Missouri Public Health Association
- University of Missouri Kansas City

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Establish a formal Public Health and Healthcare Workforce Commission

*Lead: Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development*

Establishing a formal Public Health & Healthcare Workforce Commission charged with collecting and disseminating data, and informing policy surrounding Public Health & Healthcare workforce efforts.

3

Expand Area Health Education Center pipeline programming

*Lead: Department of Health and Senior Services*

Expanding programs focused on connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health to enhance access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventive care, by growing and supporting Missouri's healthcare workforce.

5

Revise certification requirements and CIP codes for health science programs

*Lead: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Revising certification requirements and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes to expand access to stackable credentials and boost the number of healthcare and public health instructors.

2

Expand the PRIMO program

*Lead: Department of Health and Senior Services*

Expanding and rebranding the Primary Care Resource Initiative for Missouri (PRIMO) to include student loans, loan forgiveness, loan repayment and tuition reimbursement for more categories of healthcare, public health and mental health practitioners.

4

Expand access to middle school health science exploration programming

*Lead: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Boosting interest and participation in health education by expanding access to DESE Career and Technical Education programming to middle school students.

6

Require HOSA-Future Health Professionals for health science programs

*Lead: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Requiring Health Occupations Students of America-Future Health Professionals as the Career and Technical Student Organization for all health science programs to standardize early health science education and boost interest in healthcare careers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

7

Provide financial assistance for students earning stackable credentials in health science education

*Lead: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Establishing financial aid for low-income and disadvantaged families to eliminate barriers for enrollment in health science programs, particularly those offering stackable credentials.

9

Promote tax credit incentives for medical preceptors and instructors

*Lead: Department of Revenue*

Monitoring newly implemented tax credit for preceptors for medical students and, if impactful, seek tax credit incentives for other licensed medical professionals to be preceptors for clinical rotations and to teach in accredited programs.

8

Establish incentives for expanded enrollment

*Lead: Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development*

Establishing monetary incentives for academic institutions to expand enrollment in healthcare and public health programs with proportional payments tied to increased enrollment numbers.

10

Foster internships, apprenticeships and fellowships

*Lead: Department of Health and Senior Services*

Optimizing grant funding to support new and expand existing opportunities for internships, fellowships and apprenticeships in both healthcare, public health and state agency settings.

11

Payment of wages for healthcare students in the clinical stage of their education

*Lead: Board of Nursing and Missouri Hospital Association*

Promoting and expanding academic/clinical partnerships and "Earn While You Learn" models to allow healthcare students to earn a wage while obtaining clinical education.

12

Enhance and expand residency opportunities for healthcare professionals

*Lead: Department of Social Services, MoHealthNet Division*

Increasing the number of residency opportunities in the State of Missouri to encourage physicians to stay and practice within the state.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

13

Establish a Mental Health Therapy Assistant pilot program

*Lead: Department of Mental Health*

Piloting a 2 year Mental Health Therapy Assistant program to increase access to care for individuals with mental illnesses. These positions can provide direct care, assist with treatment plans and support individuals in hospital, clinic or long-term care settings.

15

Establish a Healthcare Education Ladder Program (HELP)

*Lead: Department of Social Services*

Establishing healthcare education ladder programming to allow individuals receiving benefits to work in healthcare positions at a higher income level while retaining benefits.

17

Establish value-based premium pay for certified staff

*Lead: Department of Mental Health*

Establishing value-based payments for facilities that achieve staff retention and performance measure goals and premium pay opportunities for certified staff.

14

Identify methods to boost enrollment in CNA training programs

*Lead: Department of Health and Senior Services*

Assessing the current workforce landscape, identifying barriers to enrollment and developing methods to increase enrollment in Certified Nursing Assistant training to strengthen the healthcare workforce.

16

Assist unlicensed personnel as they pursue education through supportive services

*Lead: Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development*

Providing paid training and educational opportunities to unlicensed individuals interested in joining the healthcare workforce.

18

Placement of qualified DOC Offenders in healthcare positions

*Lead: Missouri Health Care Association*

Implementing the promising practice of placing qualified correctional offenders in healthcare, maintenance and housekeeping positions in long-term care, behavioral and healthcare facilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

19

Increase the Fast Track Workforce Development Grant income maximum

*Lead: Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development*

Increasing the income cap requirements for the Fast Track program and establishing pipeline programming to promote certification, training and apprenticeships in the healthcare and public health industries.

21

Establish child care benefits for healthcare workers

*Lead: Department of Social Services*

Increasing income limits for DSS child care subsidies for individuals working in healthcare and public health settings, establishing child care facilities in state agency congregate care facilities, and implementing a tax credit to offset child care costs.

23

Support tuition reimbursement for state agency staff in healthcare and public health settings

*Lead: Department of Health and Senior Services*

Increasing recruitment and retention by offering tuition reimbursement for state agency team members pursuing GED certifications, undergraduate and graduate degrees, and ESL courses.

20

Develop a human resource toolkit to guide recruitment, training, and retention

*Lead: Department of Mental Health*

Developing a human resource toolkit for healthcare facilities and providers and public health entities to disseminate best practices for recruitment, retention, policy design and retraining team members.

22

Establish a training bridge pilot program to connect individuals to healthcare certification training and apprenticeships

*Lead: Department of Mental Health*

Linking individuals utilizing crisis services (shelters, wrap-around DMH services) to scholarship opportunities to fund healthcare certification training and apprenticeships.

24

Develop media campaigns to promote healthcare careers

*Lead: Department of Health and Senior Services*

Developing a targeted media campaign to attract recruits and increase trust in the healthcare and public health industries.